

Growing With Alberta

*A Historical Review of University Education
in Alberta*

Commissioned by

The University of Alberta
The University of Calgary
The University of Lethbridge
Athabasca University

for National Universities Week
October 2 - 8, 1983

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Written by Gail Kun, Research Assistant
The University of Calgary



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IN THE BEGINNING...

Higher education in Alberta is as old as the province itself. Alberta was declared a province in 1905, and during the first session of the legislature in 1906, Premier Alexander Cameron Rutherford, Minister of Education, introduced the University Act to establish a provincial university. The early history of university education in the province is a history of that first institution for the Act decreed that there be only one university.

Dr. Rutherford recruited Henry Marshall Tory to serve as the founding president of the University of Alberta, a post he held from 1908 to 1928. Under the University Act, the president was chosen by cabinet appointment. Dr. Tory, a mathematics professor at McGill University in Montreal, was no stranger to pioneering higher education in Western Canada. At the request of the British Columbia government, he had established McGill University College in Vancouver which was to become the University of British Columbia in 1908 after operating as an extension of McGill for some years. The rapid development of the University of Alberta can be in large part attributed to the vision and careful planning of its first president.

The choice of a permanent site for the university was a source of great controversy. Because Edmonton had been chosen as the capital of the new province, a determined group in Calgary began promoting their city as the site of the provincial university. To the bitter disappointment of the Calgary promoters, Strathcona was selected by the provincial cabinet as the site. It was situated across the river from Edmonton in Premier Rutherford's riding, to be incorporated into the City of Edmonton in 1912.

Percy Nobbs, of the Montreal firm of Nobbs and Hyde, was named architect in charge of designing the buildings and planning the university campus. He envisioned a campus constructed in red brick and white stone and designed for rapid growth. On the recommendation of Mr. Nobbs, Professor Cecil Scott Burgess of McGill University was recruited as his assistant. Professor Burgess was closely involved in the planning of the university buildings and introduced instruction in architecture into the early curriculum. In fact, the building of the university had important ramifications for construction throughout the province besides the teaching program that it initiated. A testing laboratory was built in 1911 on the site to test and research building materials for use in the province. This was the first of many university research programs directed to Alberta's economic development.

Calgary College

The Calgary lobby for a local university remained strong. In 1910, Conservative MLA R. B. Bennett (later Prime Minister of Canada) introduced a bill to establish Calgary University. The bill was amended (under pressure from the University of Alberta) to eliminate degree-granting status for the Calgary institution. Calgary College was incorporated as a private junior college and began operation in 1912 from the Carnegie Library (still standing in Central Park). Supporters continued to press for university status and the college persisted in offering university level courses, including the only training in law west of Winnipeg at the time.

The Falconer Commission

In 1914, the provincial government, in an effort to resolve the question of whether or not to decentralize university education, appointed a Royal Commission of three university presidents from outside the province. The Commission members were: Sir Robert Falconer of the University of Toronto, chairman; Stanley McKenzie of Dalhousie University; and Walter Murray of the University of Saskatchewan, which had opened in 1907. The Commission concurred with the provincial policy of the day to centralize university education at the University of Alberta. This report spelled

the demise of Calgary College which closed at the end of the 1914-1915 academic year. However, it did not kill the dream of the group of Calgarians determined to found a university there. Seemingly as compensation, the Commission proposed the establishment of the Institute of Technology and Art in Calgary as the centralized seat of technical education in the province.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The University Act (1906) provided that graduates of British and Canadian universities could register as members of the first Convocation. No fewer than 354 graduates registered by the prescribed date, and the meeting took place on 18 March 1908. Mr. Justice C. A. Stuart was elected chancellor, a post he held until 1926. The Convocation elected five members, in addition to the chancellor, to the Senate which was to be the governing body of the fledgling university. To these were added ten members appointed by the government. Initially, it was agreed that degree programs would be limited to the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Salaries for professors were set at \$2,500 per annum; Dr. Tory's salary was set at \$5,000. There were to be no increments for five years, the duration of the contracts, and then only a maximum of \$500 annually. The contracts were revocable on three months' notice. The search began for qualified teachers with the specification that they must hold a doctoral degree.

The founding faculty of the university were all recruited from outside Alberta, as in fact were all faculty for the next three or four years. They numbered only five: W. H.

Alexander, classics; E. K. Broadus, English; W. M. Edwards, mathematics; L. H. Alexander, modern languages; and Dr. Tory, who taught history and acted as registrar.

Classes opened in September 1908 in the Duggan Street School (later renamed Queen Alexandra School) with 45 students in attendance. Matriculation was based on Standard VII (about Grade 11) in the provincial school system. However, the university held its own matriculation examinations at schools throughout the province during the preceding summer months.

The university was not to move to its permanent campus until 1911. It moved first to new quarters in the recently completed Strathcona Collegiate Institute while construction started on the campus. The first university building completed was Athabasca Hall which was to house a residence, classrooms, laboratories, library, gymnasium and administrative offices. A second building, Assiniboia Hall, was completed in 1913. This was followed by an addition to Athabasca Hall, a third residence, Pembina Hall, and an Arts and Administration Building.

The first building to be completed on the new campus was actually not one of the university buildings, but the new home of the university's first affiliated college, Alberta

College (South), operated by the Methodist Church (now St. Stephen's College).

In 1913 a degree program in Applied Science and the first three years of a program in Medicine were offered in addition to the basic Arts and Science programs. By 1914, enrolment had reached 439 and plans were under way to further expand the curriculum.

The first class to complete an entire program at the University of Alberta graduated in 1912. It numbered twenty.

Extension Education

In an effort to gain support for higher education among the rural population of Alberta, the university established the Department of Extension in 1912 to "take the university to the people". In his report to the Senate in 1922, Dr. Tory referred to the extension work of the university as "unsurpassed on the continent". A large extension library was developed which was open to the public.

World War I

The outbreak of war in 1914 retarded the growth of the university for the duration of the war. A great many

faculty and students were seconded to the armed forces, and many lost their lives. The few remaining at the university devoted themselves to the war effort and to maintaining the established programs. Even President Tory went overseas to organize the Khaki University for Canadian servicemen.

Although building was stalled, a few new programs were added during the war years: the Faculty of Agriculture in 1915; the School of Accounting (forerunner of the Faculty of Commerce, later renamed the Faculty of Business) in 1916; the School of Pharmacy and the sub-faculty of Dentistry under the aegis of the Faculty of Medicine in 1917; and the Department of Household Economics in 1918. The "schools" gradually developed into separate faculties.

Agreements were concluded with the various professional organizations in the province whereby the university would teach requisite courses as part of professional programs and would set examinations to qualify graduates as members of the professional organizations. Control by the university of all professional examinations for the province was unique in Canada, although other provinces followed Alberta's example.

The end of the war in 1918 saw a resurgence of interest in education throughout the Western World, and an increasing emphasis on scientific research. Demand for higher

education and scientific discovery was gaining momentum and the University of Alberta had, answered such early criticism as that of Frank Oliver, publisher of Edmonton's first daily newspaper, the Edmonton Bulletin and later a federal cabinet minister. Oliver is alleged to have said, "We don't need any college here at all; if we did, it would be to turn out horse doctors."⁸

New buildings were constructed and new programs and courses were initiated, including the first summer session in 1919. Enrolment in 1919-1920 grew to 1,106, an increase of seventy-nine percent over the previous year, and nearly two-and-a-half times the prewar record.

The Research Council

From the beginning, the provincial government had closely aligned the development of the university with the economic development of the province. This thrust was emphasized with the establishment of the Scientific and Industrial Research Council of Alberta in 1919 operating in close association with the university. (The Council was reconstituted in 1930 as the Research Council of Alberta.) The president of the university was ex-officio director of research for the council. (After 1950 the president of the University of Alberta was no longer ex-officio director of

research, but continued to be a statutory member of the council.)

As the scientific faculty of the university grew after the war, members of several disciplines founded the Science Association in the fall of 1919 with the objective of identifying "the problems in Alberta to which the attention of research men should be turned."⁸ A memorandum to the Premier from Dr. Tory, dated March 1918, outlines 36 such problems ranging from the study of plants, animals, soils and farm buildings in the field of agriculture, through the use of coals, clays, petroleum and natural gas deposits and bituminous sands, to surveys of water resources and the need for meteorological observations. Many of these areas were later subjects of the research programs of the University of Alberta and of the Research Council conducted by the faculty members. One such example was the Alberta Soil Survey started in the early 1920's under the direction of Dr. Frank Wyatt. Soil scientists, using Model-T Fords or horses, and later jeeps or helicopters, conducted a detailed inventory of millions of acres of agricultural land. Although the survey was finally completed in 1970, the coordination of soil research continues to this day, and the reports of the original survey are now used by urban planners and agriculturalists.

Rapid Growth

By 1922, the University of Alberta had grown to be the fifth largest university in Canada. It had five fully organized faculties: Arts and Science, Applied Science, Medicine, Law and Agriculture. Over 1,200 students registered for that academic year, and the faculty had grown to nearly 100 full-time members. World class research was being undertaken by faculty members, as exemplified by the work of Dr. John B. Collip who shared the Nobel Prize in 1923 with Drs. Banting, Best and McCleod of Toronto for the use of insulin in the treatment of diabetes.

The Normal Schools

The provincial normal school was established in Calgary in 1906 to train teachers for all schools in the province. Teacher training was gradually decentralized with the establishment of normal schools in Camrose in 1912 and in Edmonton in 1920. The University of Alberta began training secondary school teachers in 1929, while the normal schools continued to train elementary school teachers. At the end of World War II, in 1945, the University of Alberta assumed full responsibility for all teacher training in the province, the first university in Canada to take such a step. The Edmonton and Calgary normal schools were taken over by the Faculty of Education; the Calgary Normal School

became a branch of the faculty. The Camrose normal school had closed in 1938.

The Depression

The depression years brought a decline in interest in postsecondary education. University enrolment increased very slowly and faculty numbers increased even more slowly during this period. The university operating budget actually decreased and no new buildings were started. Dr. R. C. Wallace succeeded President Tory in 1928 when Dr. Tory became president of the National Research Council of Canada.

The Banff School of Fine Arts

Contrary to the decline in the development of the university proper during the depression years, extension education continue at full pace. In the summer of 1933, the extension department, headed by E. A. (Ned) Corbett, conducted a summer theatre program in Banff. This was the forerunner of the Banff School of Fine Arts (now the Banff Centre) Continuing Education) which officially got underway in 1935 with the merging of the university's summer theatre program with painting classes conducted by the provincial Institute of Technology and Art. Classes were first held in Bretton Hall which stood on the grounds of the present Banff National Park administration office. The theatre school was

given a firm financial footing when the Carnegie Foundation granted it \$10,000 over three years. Students had to find their own lodgings and meals in the tiny tourist town, but they continued to flock to the school reflecting a surge of interest in amateur theatre during the depression.

Corbett was succeeded in 1936 by Donald Cameron who masterminded the development of the "campus in the clouds" and continued the expansion of the fine arts programs. Development of a permanent campus was stalled during the depression and World War II, although the expanding fine arts programs continued to operate out of temporary premises in Banff. A permanent site for the school on Tunnel Mountain was finalized in 1946, and several generous donations allowed the school to commence construction of the first permanent facilities. However, it was not until 1953 that the school moved to its permanent site where until 1951 it operated strictly as a summer school of the arts. In 1951 the Banff School of Advanced Management offered its first six-week session during the winter months thus expanding the scope of the school. The Banff Centre Act of 1977 established the school as an autonomous institution devoted to continuing education, and renamed it to reflect its broadening scope of subjects.

Mount Royal College

The affiliation of Mount Royal College, Calgary, in 1931 with the University of Alberta marked a new beginning of university activity in Calgary, allowing many students from the southern part of the province to begin their university studies while living at or close to home. Mount Royal, operated by the United Church of Canada, became the first junior college in Alberta to offer a wide range of university transfer programs in Arts and Science. The affiliation agreement entailed a certain degree of control over college affairs by the university. Under affiliation regulations adopted by the university in 1930, affiliated colleges were required to meet university standards for staff, library and laboratory facilities, and to use examinations set by the university for transfer programs.

World War II

The impact of World War II was very different from that of the war of 1914-1918. Though the war disrupted university life and facilities were turned over to the use of the armed forces, enrolment did not decrease appreciably. The Canadian Air Force took over the three residences

(Athabasca, Assiniboia and Pembina Halls) and regular students were housed in local boarding houses. As part of the war effort, accelerated programs were offered in Medicine, Dentistry and Education, and research programs were geared to the needs of the war. The end of World War II marked the beginning of a major expansion of university education in Canada. Returning veterans caused a dramatic increase in university enrolments, and scientific research had attained a new relevance during the war. Governments responded with increased funding for the universities.

The University Act Amended, 1942

Dr. Robert Newton took over as president in 1941 and devoted much of his time to drafting a new University Act. The Act, which passed in 1942, established the university as an autonomous institution and revamped the administrative structure by establishing the General Faculties Council as the supreme academic body and vesting final authority in the Board of Governors. The Senate remained principally as a liaison organization with the community. Responsibility for the appointment of the president was transferred from the Cabinet to the Board of Governors.

Federal Funding of Universities

Prior to World War II, Canadian universities received little direct financial support from the federal government. However, as early as 1941, the federal government initiated a veterans' rehabilitation program which included subsidized university education. University enrolment in Canada more than doubled after the war as many veterans took advantage of the offer to continue their education. This influx brought substantial income to the universities. When the veterans graduated and enrolments receded to pre-war levels, the universities faced financial crisis. This situation was recognized in 1949 by the Massey Commission, appointed by the federal government to study the arts, letters and sciences.

In 1951, in response to the recommendations of the Massey Commission, the federal government began to fund universities directly. These funds were allocated on the basis of university enrolment as a proportion of provincial population, and were administered by the Canadian Universities Foundation (forerunner of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada). All member institutions of this organization received a share.

Between 1951 and 1966, the federal government responded repeatedly to university projections of doubling and

tripling enrolments by making significant funding increases to the universities. Funding in Alberta reached an average five dollars per capita by 1966. As a result of objections from the provincial governments (mainly Quebec) to federal involvement in education, which was a provincial responsibility under the British North America Act and remains so under the new Canadian constitution, the federal government withdrew from direct support of universities in 1967. Under new legislation, federal funding was channeled through the provincial governments by means of annual transfers of tax revenue and cash at a rate roughly equal to half of university operating costs (operating costs were calculated on the basis of a federal audit of provincial records). The provinces, in turn, gave universities within their jurisdiction annual operating grants which included the federal funding.

A revision of the federal legislation in 1977 effectively ended federal influence over how the grants were disbursed by the provincial governments by removing the clause that specified an equal split in the responsibility for funding of postsecondary education between the two levels of government. The federal government did, however, continue to support postsecondary education under Established Programs Financing (EPF) with the now unconditional transfer of tax revenue and cash to the provinces. The federal contribution is calculated by annually indexing the

estimated half share of operating grants, using 1975-76 as the base year. This system of federal transfers to the provinces continues today, although the federal government has served notice that it seeks changes to improve the visibility of its role and the accountability of the provinces in disbursing the funds.

Provincial Funding

When Leduc No. One blew in heralding Alberta's first oil discovery in 1947, it marked the beginning of a period of prosperity for the depression-ridden province that was to leave a lasting legacy in improved social services. Using increased revenues from the oil production, coupled with increased federal funding for postsecondary education, the provincial government was able to finance a major expansion of the whole sphere of postsecondary education. To the present time, support of higher education in Alberta exceeds the national average.

The University of Alberta Today

In 1982-83, the University of Alberta registered 21,045 full-time students in the winter session. The full-time equivalent academic staff numbered almost 2,500, and the university awarded 4,669 academic degrees. Operating

expenditures amounted to just under 207 million dollars, while research grants totalled almost 44 million dollars.

Today the university maintains a close affiliation with the University of Alberta Hospitals and several associated research facilities, operates a research farm, and research park, and is a partner in several interuniversity research programs, to name only a few developments. The actual campus provides almost 470 million square metres of space in its many buildings.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Between 1957 and 1966, rapid expansion of university education in Alberta led to the gradual separation of the Calgary campus of the University of Alberta from the main campus in Edmonton. An explosive increase in university enrolment during this period was influenced by two phenomena: the maturing of the postwar "baby boom" generation and the launching by the Russians of Sputnik, the first space satellite. This latter event brought a great surge of interest in science education. Enrolment increased from 5,000 to 16,000 on the Edmonton campus while the increase was ten-fold, from 400 to 4,100, on the Calgary campus. Since 1945, the Calgary branch of the Faculty of Education had shared the premises of the provincial Institute of Technology and Art. Planning started in the late 1950's for a separate campus. In 1960, the University of Alberta at Calgary, as it was then called, moved to the first buildings in its present location, while it remained under the administration of the main campus in Edmonton.

During this period, the range and complexity of programs offered by the University of Alberta was steadily increasing. This was reflected in the creation of a Faculty of Graduate Studies in 1957 and the division of the Faculty of Arts and Science into separate faculties in 1963. The

variety of programs available at the Calgary branch also expanded rapidly to include, in addition to the original Education program, first year Commerce and Engineering in 1957, Graduate Studies and second year Arts and Science in 1959, a full degree program in Arts and Science in 1960, and second year Commerce in 1961.

By the mid-sixties, the University of Alberta was becoming too large and complex to be administered effectively as a single unit. Both the university and the government began to recognize the need for further decentralization of the services and administration. Separate faculties of Arts and Science, Education, Graduate Studies, and Engineering were established in Calgary between 1963 and 1965. In 1964, the Board of Governors struck a committee to study possible changes in university government and administration.

The University Act Amended, 1964

The provincial government amended the University Act in 1964 to provide for the appointment of a president and a separate General Faculties Council for the University of Alberta at Calgary. This made the Calgary branch autonomous in academic matters. The amendment also established a Coordinating Council to maintain liaison between the increasingly separate campuses of the University of Alberta. Dr. H. S. Armstrong became the first president of the

Calgary branch of the University of Alberta, and later the founding president of The University of Calgary.

Supervision of university transfer programs at Mount Royal College and the junior colleges in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat became the responsibility of the Calgary branch of the university in 1963. All other junior college transfer programs continued to be supervised by the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

The Universities Act, 1966

In 1966, the government responded to the rapid development of the university sector with a new policy of diversification marked by the introduction of the Universities Act. This established The University of Calgary as an autonomous institution. It also provided for the establishment of other autonomous universities as required.

The affiliation of the Banff School of Fine Arts was transferred to The University of Calgary, and the Coordinating Council was reconstituted as an advisory body to both universities. The Universities Act also established a Universities Commission as a separate corporation to advise the government on university finance and to coordinate the higher education needs of the province. The

commission was dissolved in 1973 and its responsibilities transferred to the Department of Advanced Education, which had recently been separated from the Department of Education.

Still Growing

Added in 1967 to the pre-autonomy programs offered in Arts and Science, Education, Engineering and Graduate Studies, were the School of Social Welfare, Faculties of Business and Fine Arts, and the School of Physical Education. The Faculty of Medicine and the School of Nursing accepted their first students in 1970. In 1972, the Faculty of Environmental Design was started. Nursing, Physical Education and Social Welfare became faculties in 1975. The Faculty of Law welcomed its first class in 1976.

By the fall of 1983 there were over 14,000 full-time students at The University of Calgary, and full-time equivalent academic staff numbered 1,010. In 1983 the university had 30,000 alumni. The 1983-84 operating budget is 133.1 million dollars and research grants exceeded 25 million dollars.

The academic buildings on campus provide 190,000 square metres of classroom and laboratory space. In addition, the Faculties of Medicine and Nursing carry out teaching

programs and clinical research at the Foothills Hospital. The university is a partner in several interuniversity research programs in Western Canada, such as the Bamfield Marine Station on Vancouver Island. It has one research park nearing full occupancy and another area under development in cooperation with the City of Calgary and the Calgary Chamber of Commerce.

THE COLLEGES

The first University Act (1906) made provision for the affiliation of private junior colleges with the University of Alberta for purposes of offering postsecondary courses leading to a degree. A number of church-related colleges took advantage of this provision to offer partial degree programs in addition to programs in theology.

Alberta College, founded by the Methodist Church in 1903 in Edmonton, was the first institution of higher education in the province, predating the University of Alberta. Construction of Alberta College South began in 1910 and it was built on the campus of the University of Alberta.

Robertson College, Presbyterian, was established in Strathcona in 1911 and affiliated with the University of Alberta. When the Congregational Presbyterian and Methodist churches merged to form the United Church, Robertson College merged with Alberta College South to establish St. Stephen's College in 1926. To the present time, St. Stephen's occupies the original Alberta College South building, which, except for the chapel, is operated by Alberta Culture.

College Saint-Jean, Roman Catholic, first established in Pincher Creek in 1908, and in Strathcona in 1911, did not

affiliate with the University of Alberta until 1963. The college was gradually integrated into the university and became a full-fledged faculty in 1970 offering French instruction and teacher training.

Concordia College, established in Edmonton by the Lutheran Church in 1921, initiated a postsecondary program in 1925, and affiliated with the University of Alberta in 1968.

The Lutheran congregation also established in 1959 the Camrose Lutheran College, affiliated with the University of Alberta.

Canadian Union College, operated near Lacombe by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, affiliated with the University of Alberta in 1971.

The School Act of 1931 had made provision for local school boards to establish public junior colleges which could offer university transfer programs under the supervision of the University of Alberta. However, none had taken advantage of this legislation until the establishment of Lethbridge Junior College in 1957 as a division of Lethbridge Collegiate Institute. The control that the University of Alberta exercised over its affiliated colleges coupled with a scarcity of funding for the colleges had a steering effect on the type of programs developed by these public colleges.

The early priority of Lethbridge Junior College was the development of a university transfer program at the expense of the business and vocational programs which developed more slowly.

By 1966, there was a total of five public junior colleges offering university transfer programs in the province. These were the colleges in Lethbridge, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, and Mount Royal College in Calgary. The latter was converted in 1966 from a private United Church college to public status (Mount Royal had offered university transfer programs since 1931 under the supervision of the University of Alberta).

The Universities Act Amended, 1980 and 1983

An amendment to the Universities Act in 1980 authorized private colleges to offer programs leading to degrees conferred by the affiliating university. A further amendment of the Act in 1983 gave those colleges degree-granting status and established an accreditation board to monitor standards.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

Following passage of the Universities Act (1966) which decentralized university education, the University of Lethbridge emerged in Canada's 1967 centennial year from the academic section of Lethbridge Junior College. In 1971, the university moved out of the college to its newly constructed campus. The campus, designed by Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson, has received international acclaim for architectural originality. Just as The University of Calgary was the result of persistent lobbying by local citizens, the University of Lethbridge owes its existence to a determined group of local residents who wanted a university in their community.

The university offers undergraduate degree programs in Arts and Science, Education, Fine Arts, Management, Music and Nursing. Formal transfer arrangements are in effect for professional programs at other Western Canadian universities. Lethbridge was the first Alberta university to offer cooperative education programs whereby students could alternate periods of related work with their studies as part of the academic program. The university was also the first in Canada to establish an independent, academic department in Native American Studies. All programs emphasize individual study with the opportunity to design

courses geared to individual needs under the supervision of a faculty member.

In its first year of operation, the University of Lethbridge registered 638 students. In 1982-83, enrolment reached an all-time high of 2,400 full-time students in the fall session. A total of 363 academic degrees were conferred. Also by 1982-83, full-time equivalent faculty numbered 211 and the provincial operating grant was in excess of 19 million dollars. The university plans to introduce the first graduate program in 1984, a master's degree in education.

The first buildings constructed on the campus were University Hall and the Physical Education Building. University Hall is one-fifth of a mile long with floor space equivalent to three hundred average-size houses. It houses the majority of classrooms, laboratories, administrative offices, cafeteria, and residences for 362 students.

In September, 1981, the Performing Arts Centre was opened, acclaimed as one of the most technically sophisticated fine arts facilities in a Canadian university. The centre includes two performance theatres, an art gallery, and teaching facilities for the performing arts.

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

The need for additional university facilities in northern Alberta had been discussed as early as 1966. By 1970 it appeared that enrolment at the University of Alberta would soon reach the planned optimum level of 25,000.

A False Start

In a policy statement issued in January 1970, the Minister of Education announced the impending creation of a fourth provincial university. In June, an Order in Council established Athabasca University, to be located on a campus near St. Albert, just north of Edmonton. The university was given a mandate to develop undergraduate studies in the arts, sciences, and education, and to explore new procedures in curriculum organization and instruction. Under an interim governing authority Athabasca University began academic and physical planning. In May 1971, Dr. Tim Byrne, then Deputy Minister of Education for Alberta, was named president. The academic concept that was developed emphasized individual study, a modular organizational structure which provided for close faculty-student contact, innovative instructional methods and the use of educational

technologies. The original plan was never to become a reality; conditions changed.

In 1970, enrolment at the three existing universities began to level off or decline. Then, after 36 years of Social Credit government, the Progressive Conservative party led by Peter Lougheed won the August 1971 election. By stages, the new government put plans for Athabasca University on hold pending a complete review of higher education in the province. Subsequently, plans for the St. Albert campus were halted.

A New Mandate

In December 1972, Athabasca University was re-established in a new form and assigned a new mandate. It was authorized to proceed with a pilot project to demonstrate that university courses could be developed and delivered to students for home-study and to prove that there was a need for such courses. The pilot project was judged a success and, in 1975, the government approved in principle the establishment of Athabasca University as a permanent baccalaureate university. It was formally established under the Universities Act in April, 1978.

Since that time, Athabasca has developed degree programs in Administration, Arts, and General Studies. Home-study

learning packages are mailed directly to students, who also have toll-free access to telephone tutors. Some courses are supplemented by radio and television programs, audiotapes, seminars, workshops, or teleconference sessions. Course registrations have dramatically increased from 150 in 1973, to more than 9,000 in 1982-83, remarkable considering the relative stabilization of conventional university enrolments during the 1970's. The university's tutorial support system involves 150 part-time tutors. Modelled partially after the Open University in Britain, Athabasca University is unique in Canada as the only fully-autonomous university dedicated solely to distance education. By combining an open admissions policy and year-round registration with home study, Athabasca serves adults who are unable or unwilling to attend the traditional universities.

The innovative nature of Athabasca University is expressed even in its administration. An amendment to the Universities Act in 1978 authorized the establishment of an unicameral governing system, one of three such systems in Canada (the others are Laval and Toronto). A Governing Council combines the functions of the traditional Board of Governors, General Faculties Council and Senate.

To date, the university has operated out of rented premises in Edmonton. In 1984, however, all central office functions of the university will move to permanent facilities in the

town of Athabasca, 140 kilometres north of Edmonton. Athabasca University operates regional offices in Fort McMurray and Calgary and will continue to maintain an Edmonton office after the move to Athabasca.

CONSORTIA

The emphasis on extension education in the early days, and later on continuing education and distance delivery of educational programs, has in recent years evolved to another phase. In order to provide postsecondary education opportunities in areas of the province without a university, or college, consortia of educational institutions are cooperating to offer various levels of postsecondary education, including university programs, through a variety of delivery methods. Five regional consortia now serve outlying regions of the province. Athabasca University is involved in all five consortia while the other universities are involved in the consortium serving the region where they are located.

FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Federal financial assistance to students first became available in 1939 with passage of the Federal Youth Training Act. This legislation initiated the Dominion-Provincial Student Aid Program through which federal and provincial government loans to university students and student nurses were provided. This program was replaced in 1964 by the Canada Student Loans Program which remains the foundation for the provincially administered student aid programs across Canada.

Alberta established its own Student Assistance Program in 1953 which is administered in conjunction with the Canada Student Loans Program. (From 1920 to 1932, the provincial government had provided loans to students entering the provincial normal schools in order to attract students into the teaching profession. This limited program was discontinued during the depression when many graduates were unable to find teaching positions.)

In 1971, the provincial system of grants and loans was replaced by a loan remission system designed to reward students who completed their programs. In 1973, the loan remission system was expanded to include the Canada Student

Loans. In 1976, the Student Finance Act extended financial assistance to students at private colleges.

Tuition fees at Alberta universities increased rapidly during the 1970's and student organizations began lobbying for more liberal assistance programs.

In 1978, the provincial government appointed a task force to review the contribution of students to the costs of postsecondary education. A number of revisions to the Student Assistance Program were introduced in 1980, in response to the task force report (the Grantham Report). These included more generous loans and grants to students from rural areas, extremely needy students, and graduate and professional students. The loan remission system remains in effect.

The Heritage Fund

To preserve the prosperity that accrued from oil revenues for future generations of Albertans, the provincial government established the Heritage Trust Fund. This fund has benefited the universities in a number of ways and has contributed to the provincial government's dream of creating a "brain trust" in Alberta.

In 1980, the government established the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research with an endowment of 300 million dollars. Research grants financed by the income of the fund have attracted many world class research scientists to the universities of Alberta and Calgary where the faculties of Medicine and the large teaching hospitals house a nucleus of medical scientists.

The 1980's Advanced Education Endowment Fund has provided 80 million dollars in matching grants for private donations to universities. The government matches dollar for dollar all capital gifts as well as the revenue generated from endowments. This move has greatly encouraged private support for the universities.

The Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund, an endowment of 100 million dollars announced in 1980, provides the income to support scholarships and achievement awards in various fields.

The Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority (AOSTRA) was organized in 1974 and is supported by a research fund valued at 144 million dollars.

In 1977, The Agricultural Research Council was established.

The budget and programs of the Research Council of Alberta have been augmented to support research contributing to the economic growth of the province.

ROUNDUP

The far-sighted plans of Henry Marshall Tory as he planned for a great university amid the skepticism of the early pioneers of the province led eventually to the development of one of the largest universities in the country. The early insistence on centralized university education was finally overcome in 1966 to produce a diversified province-wide system of universities and junior colleges offering various types of higher education programs.

Each university exists because of the persistence of a dedicated group of interested citizens in the local community. In many instances these interest groups were bitterly disappointed as their hopes were dashed by a provincial government that insisted on the slow and careful building of the system from the nucleus of the University of Alberta. Many times, politics have dictated planning decisions. But in the final analysis, the excellent system that has emerged will serve the citizens of the province well as they enter the twenty-first century.

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